

# Refugees and Asylum Seekers

## A Nation of Thugs

On 27 September 2001 Chris Sidoti addressed a seminar on *Refugees, Gangs and Racial Punishment* at Sydney University hosted by Pluto Press. In a paper entitled “A Nation of Thugs”, Mr Sidoti criticised the major parties’ approach to asylum seekers in the run up to the federal elections in November 2001, accusing Australia’s national leaders of turning their backs on the highest qualities of leadership, vision and humanity shown by their predecessors. “What they are doing is damaging us. It is destroying our hopes and aspirations, our self esteem, our sense of honour, our compassion and our decency. Our leaders, from both major political groupings, are turning us into a nation of thugs.” View [A Nation of Thugs](#).

## Refugee policy: Is there a way out of the mess

On 21 February 2002 Chris Sidoti addressed a meeting of Racial Respect in Canberra. In his paper, *Refugee policy: Is there a way out of this mess?*, Mr Sidoti identified Australia’s breaches of its international treaty obligations in its handling of asylum seekers. He also gave a scathing critique of the policies and practices of the major parties. His damning indictment of Australian policy in the area was followed by a number of proposals which provide a way out of the embarrassing and costly mess in which Australia currently finds itself. View [Refugee policy: Is there a way out of this mess?](#)

## Without prejudice: discrimination and refugees

On 14 November 2002 delivered a paper to the NSW State Conference of the Local Government Community Services Association entitled “Without prejudice: discrimination and refugees”. He argued that Asylum seekers and refugees in Australia experience discrimination in law and practice and made suggestions as to what councils can and should do to address it. View [Without prejudice: discrimination and refugees](#).

## Truth Overboard: One Year After Tampa

On 5 December 2002 Chris Sidoti delivered a paper at Deakin University entitled “Truth Overboard: One Year After Tampa” in which he reviewed events since the Tampa in August 2001. Rather than becoming bogged down in recriminations for past injustices this insightful paper looks to ahead arguing for policy changes that enable Australia to cope with ongoing issues in a way that is just and in Australia’s national interest. View [Truth Overboard: One Year After Tampa](#).

Set out below are some other papers on the issue:

## Reforming Australian Refugee and Asylum Seeker Policy

Australian refugee policy suffers a lack of principle in its basis and formulation. Present policy is reactive, piecemeal and ad hoc without any clear foundation in law or ethics, grounded in public fear and government manipulation. Reform is needed. A briefing paper prepared for the Human Rights Council in September 2002 examines the issues in detail. View [It’s broke and it needs fixing](#).

## **Lisbon Expert Roundtable on Effective Protection**

The Lisbon Expert Roundtable held on 9 and 10 December 2002 reviewed the concept of “effective protection” in the context of secondary movements of asylum-seekers and refugees. The roundtable was organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Migration Policy Institute and hosted by the Luso-American Foundation for Development. View the [Summary](#) [Conclusions](#).

## **Australian Immigration Detention Centres: International Complaint under OECD Guidelines**

On 15 June 2005 HRCA joined with the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID), Children Out of Detention (ChilOut) and the Brotherhood of St Laurence to lodge a submission in the United Kingdom and Australia complaining about serious human rights violations in Australian immigration detention centres contrary to OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. View the [Submission](#).